

so are large enough to be cut again. This process is called coppicing and it actually prolongs the life of the individual plants.

You will notice that in some areas the chestnut has been prevented from regrowth. This is where the best of the original heathland flora has been found. Flowers can flourish for a short time under recently-cut chestnut, but once the regrowth is four or five years old it begins once more to shade out the flowers, which must survive as seed until the next cut. Look for the delicate pink centaury amongst the young coppice, and st. john's wort with its yellow star-shaped flowers.

Nightjars favour large areas of cut coppice as nest sites, but otherwise it is rather poor habitat for birds. However, many types of butterfly visit the clearings in spring and summer.



Richard Revels

Male stonechat

The Stream

The trail passes by a stream bordered by alder and birch trees. These trees produce masses of tiny seeds which are very attractive to flocks of redpoll and siskin in the winter months. Plants such as pendulous sedge thrive in these damper areas. The stream is an important place for the many animals and birds living in these dry woods and heaths. It is here that they will come to drink during hot, dry weather.

Pembury Heathland Walk

TRAIL GUIDE

- We hope you enjoy your visit to the Pembury Heathland.
- Please keep your dogs on a lead at all times so as not to disturb the wildlife.
- Please leave wild flowers for others to enjoy.
- Please do not ride bikes or horses around the trail.
- Please do not light fires.

Why not leave your car at home?

Pembury residents can enjoy the trail by walking from home. Other people living close by may consider using public transport where and when it is available. The following bus routes pass through Pembury:-

- 296** Royal Tunbridge Wells to Paddock Wood
- 6** Royal Tunbridge Wells to Maidstone
- 297** Royal Tunbridge Wells to Tenterden
- 286** Royal Tunbridge Wells to Pembury
- 277** Sherwood to Pembury
- 206** Royal Tunbridge Wells to Five Oak Green
- 288** Paddock Wood to Royal Tunbridge Wells
- 208/209** East Peckham and Tonbridge to Pembury

Railway Stations at Paddock Wood, Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells.

For more details contact Kent Public Transport Helpline – 0345 696996

Tourist Information: Royal Tunbridge Wells – 01892 515675



For more information contact: **Kent High Weald Project, Council Offices, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EN Tel: 01580 715918**



Welcome

Welcome to Pembury Heathland Walk. The waymarked trail is approximately 3 miles long, and makes a good 2 hour stroll. However, the terrain is hilly, and the paths are often slippery under foot during wet weather.

You can walk the trail in either direction – just follow the bird waymarks! Walkers can join the route at any point, there are several public footpaths and lanes which link with the Pembury Heathland Walk.



Lowland Heath

Much of Britain's lowland heath has been lost over the last century to roads, housing developments and forestry. At Pembury we are attempting to restore this fragile habitat to its former condition. This requires the removal of planted trees followed by a programme of management to prevent birch and bracken from dominating the open ground. In the past, most heathlands were common ground which were kept as open spaces by grazing livestock, and by cutting trees and gorse for fuel.



Common heather

Look for typical heathland plants such as heather (ling) and bilberry in the drier, sandy areas. A small amount of the two scarcer heathers occur along the walk. These are bell heather found on dry banks, and cross-leaved heath, a plant of damp, boggy sites.

Cross-leaved heath



Extensive areas of open heathland are attractive to nightjars. You may be lucky enough to hear their unusual 'churring' song late on a summer's evening. Other heathland birds likely to be encountered are the attractive stonechat with its bright black, white and chestnut plumage, and the drabber tree pipit which sings whilst 'parachuting' from the tops of isolated trees.

Crossbill

Hadlow Estate

Newbars Wood

Old Church Road South East Water Treatment Works and Reservoir

Church Road Cross at the footbridge

Wood ant nest

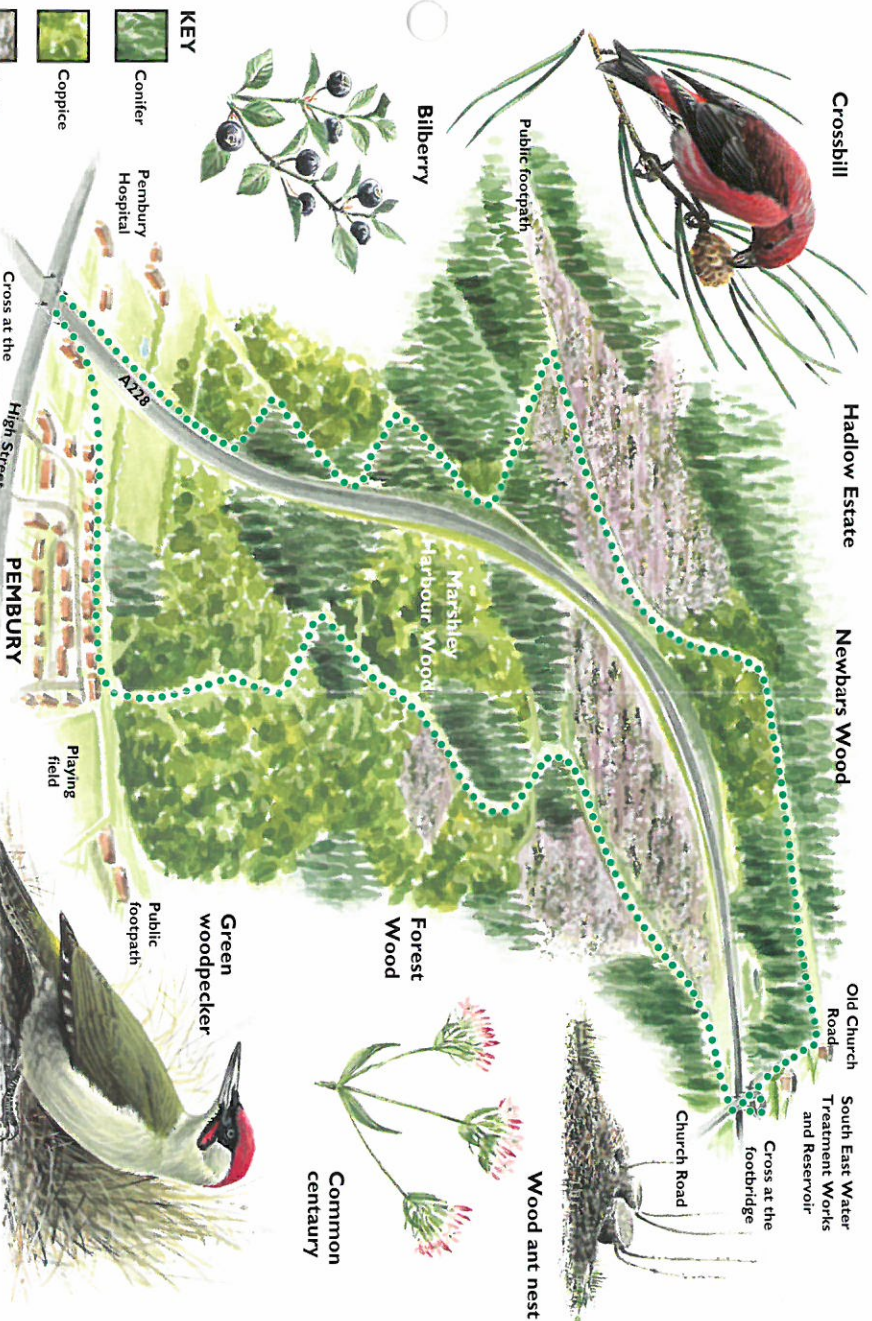
Forest Wood

Common centaury

Green woodpecker

Public footpath

Playing field



Conifer Plantation

Scots pine and larch have been planted on the site since at least 1920 and have previously been harvested for planking, fence posts and more recently for woodchip. This forestry process continues and the woodland will be gradually thinned as it reaches maturity. The softwood trees support several bird species such as coal tit and the diminutive goldcrest. Occasionally, crossbills visit to feed in the conifers, their bills perfectly adapted to removing seeds from cones.

The green woodpecker is usually very conspicuous because of its loud laughing call. Its favourite food is the wood ant, whose huge nests of pine leaves may be seen along the trails. In winter the woodpeckers attempt to reach the

ants by digging holes into the nests with their beaks. Because of the dense litter of needles shed from the trees, and the shading by the canopy, few plants can survive in these plantations.

Chestnut Coppice

Sweet chestnut is presumed to have been introduced into Britain by the Romans, who used the tasty nuts as nutritional food whilst the wood was suitable for building and fencing. The extensive areas of chestnut at Pembury were planted around one hundred years ago. Every 10-12 years areas known as cants, or panels, are cut down to ground level and the wood converted into fencing materials. New shoots spring from the cut stumps and within another ten years or